



NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE
FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN

ROYAL NETHERLANDS ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Wassenaar, 3 May 1993

Professor Joshua Lederberg
The Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021-6399

Dear Josh:

Your welcome letter with enclosures only recently reached me here in the Netherlands-- the forwarding of larger packages seems to be a problem for my home institution-- and I am answering at an early opportunity.

I have been spending the year here at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study as the recipient of the Golestan Foundation Award for Research in Psychiatry. It has been a highly rewarding experience as I have been able to confer and collaborate with colleagues from diverse parts of the globe and with many of the excellent scientists located not far from here in Germany, France, and Switzerland.

Thank you for remembering me through the Janus connection. I am glad to know about the book. However, I did want to make sure to say the author of the book, "The Janus Face of Genius", used Janus in a different way than I do. She was looking at an apparent duality in Newton's personality not the conceptualizing of simultaneous opposites. I do not know about the former (and will look for the book) but I do have a lot of evidence for the latter. The opposite faced Janus is often used to represent duality alone, not the specific matter of opposition that I have often observed.

I very much appreciated the reprints regarding your current work. I have been keeping up especially with molecular genetics this year and am therefore in a position to know how very important is your research on differential mutability of DNA. The overall approach and the information in the material you sent looks very exciting. Especially edifying and characteristic of the creative approaches you use --which I have long appreciated --were the "rummaging through the attic" and "anti-expert". I have written something about creative use of error as a special process and these pieces seem to corroborate that point. If possible, I would like to talk more with you about this at a later date.

The idea of a probable circular process in mutations seems quite crucial. In an interesting and not so extended way there is a parallel issue in "psychological" creativity as well. Many would contend that creativity is a selection

process applied to spontaneously arising "new" ideas. While there is something meaningful in this formulation, circularity and other influences on the development of ideas play--I feel quite sure--a critical role. There may be much in common between human creativity and creativity in nature.

Thank you very much for writing. I am unfortunately leaving here at the end of June but will fortunately then look forward to greater proximity again and hopefully further correspondence with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Albert", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Albert Rothenberg M.D.

Enc.